

It's Smart To Be Gallery Wise!

THE WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON GALLERY OF ART
AND ATKINS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

NEWS FLASHES

June 1 - 30, 1936

VAN GOGH EXHIBITION

VAN GOGH PREVIEW: An art event for Kansas City, second only in importance to the opening of the Gallery, is the great VAN GOGH EXHIBITION which will open with a Special Preview on Tuesday Evening, June 9th, at 8:00 P.M. It is hoped that Kansas City will turn out en masse to do homage to one of the greatest figures in the history of art, who, through his superb paintings and the several books which have recently dramatized his life, has become one of the most widely known artists in the history of the world.

All patrons of the Gallery and readers of the News Letter are cordially invited to attend the PREVIEW. The expense of bringing the exhibition to Kansas City is so great that a nominal charge of fifty cents is being made for this opening evening.

THE EXHIBITION: The thirty paintings and thirty-six drawings which comprise the largest group of the works of Van Gogh ever gathered together, were assembled by the Museum of Modern Art for its main winter show of the 1935-36 season. It was seen in New York by over 125,000 people and broke all records for attendance. Since that time it has been seen in Philadelphia, Boston, Cleveland, and San Francisco. In each city the visitors exceeded 100,000 and before the closing in San Francisco, over 150,000 people had been thrilled by the dramatic canvases with their brilliant colorings which are a complete record of the artist's tragic life. Now the exhibition comes direct to Kansas City and will not be shown closer than Chicago.

Almost the entire collection is drawn principally from the great Kröller-Müller Foundation of Wassenaar, Holland. Word has just been received that the complete group has been accepted formally by the Dutch Government and upon its return to that country, will be placed in a special public museum, never again to leave Holland. Hence this is the first and last opportunity to see the comprehensive works of Van Gogh. Valued at one million dollars, the collection includes examples of his earliest paintings such as "The Potato Diggers", studies for "The Potato Eaters"; "Montmartre" from the Paris period; "Bridge at Arles", "Shoes", "Sunflowers", "Madame Roulin Rocking a Cradle", which were painted in southern France, and the superb "Cypresses", "Pine Trees", "Ravine", and "The Good Samaritan" of the San Remy period when he was in the asylum. The drawings, in which one can see perhaps more closely the influence of Millet and others of the Barbizon School, date almost entirely from the Dutch Period and are poignant records of his attempt to form a distinctive and original style, which emerged in his paintings only after his contact with the Impressionists in Paris.

The tragedy of Vincent van Gogh's life can be vividly illustrated by the contrast shown between the world's complete neglect of even his masterpieces while he lived and the appreciation and homage the world gives to his work now he is dead. So far as can be ascertained, Van Gogh during his lifetime was able to sell only two of the more than 700 pictures he painted. One of these was a portrait he was commissioned to paint for 20 francs (\$4); the other, a landscape, his brother sold for 400 francs (\$80) a year before the artist's death. In addition, Van Gogh sold about twenty drawings at an average price of \$1.25 a drawing. These comprised his entire sales during his lifetime, from which he realized a total amount of little more than one hundred dollars. One of his paintings of sunflowers, a favorite subject with Van Gogh, he himself modestly estimated should bring 500 francs (\$100), but there was no sale of it during his lifetime. At present one of these sunflower paintings is for sale in Paris for \$100,000.

Vincent van Gogh, son of a Dutch Protestant pastor, was born at Zundert, The Netherlands, in 1853. His early life was a succession of failures: six years a picture dealer, then a brief, uneasy career as a French school-teacher and lay preacher in England; bitter disillusion as a student preparing for theological school; a terrible ordeal as an evangelist among Belgian miners. At the age of twenty-eight, he determined to become a painter. For five years he lived in poverty in his native Holland, supported by his brother Theo.

In 1886, Van Gogh went to Paris, where, influenced by the Impressionists, his painting began to show colours brighter than the murky greens and browns he had used in Holland. In 1888, under the burning sun of Provence, he at last discovered himself and for the remaining two years of his short life painted with such violent energy that his canvases radiate a terrible vitality of colour, rhythm and form. Those last years were marked by periods of epileptoid attacks and when Van Gogh shot himself, in July 1890, he left a last note to his brother: "I am risking my life for my work and for it my sanity has half-foundered."

Although he is known to have produced the tremendous total of 741 paintings and 829 drawings in the brief ten years he devoted to art, he died with his genius unrecognized.

The Gallery has been honored with the privilege to show these paintings and it is hoped that our attendance will at least equal that of other cities. The exhibition will continue through July 10th.

With the exception of the opening PREVIEW, the usual admission charge of twenty-five cents will be made on week days and on Wednesday evenings. Saturdays and Sundays will be free.

SPECIAL VAN GOGH LECTURES: In connection with the Exhibition, a series of lectures on the life of Van Gogh, illustrated with the paintings from the loan group, will be given by the Director on Wednesday Evenings. The Gallery will be open from seven until ten and a charge of twenty-five cents will be made, which includes admission to the lectures.

June 10th - The Dutch Period

June 17th - The Paris and Arles Periods

June 24th - The San Remy and Auvers Periods

MASTERPIECE OF THE MONTH: During the summer, the Masterpiece will be changed each month, rather than each week.

For June, a suit of Chinese Armour is being featured and is being shown for the first time. Dating from the time of the Emperor K'ang Hsi (1662-1722), it was made for one of the eight Iron Capped Princes who did much to aid in the foundation of the dynasty.

It is a superb example of the goldsmith's craft and the helmet and collar are decorated with finely wrought dragons and clouds in high relief. Differing from the steel armour of Europe, it is built on rich black satin. Only one other complete suit of this period is known.

MODERN SCULPTURE: A group of representative bronzes by six contemporary sculptors will be shown in Gallery XV for three weeks, beginning June 15th. Coming from the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art of New York City, it includes life-sized heads and small figures by Barlach, Despiau, Kolbe, Lachaise, Epstein and Maillol.

This is the first opportunity that Kansas City has had to see so inclusive a collection of sculpture of our time. Barlach and Kolbe are the finest artists of today in Germany and the work of the latter is marked by a feeling of grace and sensitive modelling. Despiau is perhaps the most traditional of all sculptors, and in his heads we find an idealized beauty that recalls the highest achievements of the Italian Renaissance. Maillol, the idol of France, recalls more than other plastic artists the superb strength and dynamic qualities of Michelangelo, while Lachaise and Epstein are certainly the foremost artists in this field in America.

PRINTS: Beginning June 8th, Gallery XVI will be hung with a series of Dürer prints from the permanent collection. This includes not only a complete set of the thirty-six Woodcut Passion Series, but also a set of the so-called small Engraved Passion. Among the other woodcuts is a rich impression from the Apocalypse and the "Great Fortune", "Portrait of Erasmus", "Melancholia" and "The Virgin With the Pear" are the best known of his engravings.

The Blake "Illustrations for the Book of Job" will remain on exhibition in Gallery XV until the middle of June. The great English poet and mystic had much in common with Van Gogh, and it will be interesting to compare the works of the two men who rank among the first of the expressionists.

FRIENDS OF ART: The last meeting of the study class of the Friends of Art for this season will be held at eleven o'clock on Thursday, June 18th. The subject will be the paintings of Van Gogh, and a number of the paintings of the artist will be brought down from the Loan Exhibition to the Library for discussion.

The campaign for members to the Society will continue and it is hoped that readers of the News Letter will subscribe to this most praiseworthy effort to build up in Kansas City a fine collection of modern art.

LOANS TO OTHER GALLERIES: Our Titian "Portrait of Cardinal Granvella" and the Tintoretto "Portrait of Contarini" have been lent to the Cleveland Museum of Art for their Twentieth Anniversary Celebration.

The Rembrandt Peale "After the Bath", perhaps the first abstraction in American art, as it is dated 1823, has been lent to the Smith College Museum for their Spring Exhibition of American Art.

SUMMER CLASSES FOR CHILDREN: On Tuesday morning, June 2nd, scores of children and their parents were waiting to enroll in the summer classes which will begin on June 13th and will meet each Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday morning until July 30th. Classes in drawing, crafts, marionettes, and clay modelling add to the enjoyment and understanding of the objects in the Gallery collection and help to correlate them with the experience of the child.



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